CLAIMS

1. A process for updating electronic information in a computer environment, comprising the steps of:

    automatically inspecting a message that is to be delivered to a first address upon receiving the message to determine whether the message contains information about a status of a second address, and

    in response to a determination that the message contains information about the status of the second address, updating a record for the second address in a database.

2. The process of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

    storing the message at the first address for retrieval by a first user at the first address.

3. The process of Claim 2, wherein the record is a portion of an address book of the first user in the database.

4. The process of Claim 3, wherein the status indicates a permanent error in delivering a message to the second address; and

    said updating is according to a user preference.

5. The process of Claim 4, wherein said updating further comprises the steps of:

    transparently removing the second address from the address book.

6.   The process of Claim 4, wherein said updating further comprises the steps of:

replacing the second address in the address book with a comment which indicates that it is undeliverable to the second address.

7.   The process of Claim 4, wherein said updating further comprises the steps of:

marking the second address; and

prompting the first user to take one or more actions with the second address.

8.   The process of Claim 1, wherein said updating further comprises the steps of:

counting a number of messages that indicate the status of the second address; and

determining whether or not the number of messages is above a threshold.

9.   The process of Claim 8, wherein said updating further comprises the step of:

determining an indicator indicating a likelihood of the second address being invalid.

10.   The process of Claim 1, wherein the second address comprises one of:

an address for electronic mails;

an address for a web page; and

a phone number.

11.   The process of Claim 2, wherein the record is a portion of an address book of a second user in the database.

12. The process of Claim 2, wherein the second address is associated with a person who has a plurality of addresses; and

       said updating comprises the step of:

       adjusting priorities of the plurality of addresses for the person.

13. An apparatus for updating address information in a computer environment, comprising:

       a module for receiving a message that is to be delivered to a first address;

       a module for automatically inspecting the message to determine whether the message contains information about a status of a second address; and

       a module for updating a record for the address in a database, in response to a determination that the message contains information about the status of the second address.

14. The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising:

       a module for storing the message at the first address for retrieval by a first user at the first address.

15. The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the record is a portion of an address book of the first user in the database.

16. The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the status indicates a permanent error in delivering a message to the second address; and

the record is updated according to a user preference.

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17. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said module for updating further comprises:

a module for transparently removing the second address from the address book.

18. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said module for updating further comprises:

a module for replacing the second address in the address book with a comment which indicates that it is undeliverable to the second address.

19. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein said module for updating further comprises:

a module for marking the second address; and

a module for prompting the first user to take one or more actions with the second address.

20. The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein said module for updating further comprises:

a module for counting a number of messages that indicate the status of the second address; and

a module for determining whether or not the number of messages is above a threshold.

21.   The apparatus of Claim 20, wherein said module for updating further comprises:

a module for determining an indicator indicating a likelihood of the second address being invalid.

5   22.   The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the second address comprises one of:

an address for electronic mails;

an address for a web page; and

a phone number.

23.   The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the record is a portion of an address book of a second user in the database.

24.   The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the second address is associated with a person who has a plurality of addresses; and

said module for updating comprises:

a module for adjusting priorities of the plurality of addresses for the person.

25.   A program storage medium readable by a computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the computer to perform a method for updating address information in a computer environment, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a message that is to be delivered to a first address;

automatically inspecting the message to determine whether the message contains information about a status of a second address; and

in response to a determination that the message contains information about the status of the second address, updating a record for the address in a database.

26.   The medium of Claim 25, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

storing the message at the first address for retrieval by a first user at the first address.

27.   The medium of Claim 26, wherein the record is a portion of an address book of the first user in the database.

28.   The medium of Claim 27, wherein the status indicates a permanent error in delivering a message to the second address; and

said updating is according to a user preference.

29.   The medium of Claim 28, wherein said updating further comprises the step of:

transparently removing the second address from the address book.

30.   The medium of Claim 28, wherein said updating further comprises the steps of:

replacing the second address in the address book with a comment which indicates that it is undeliverable to the second address.

31.   The medium of Claim 28, wherein said updating further comprises the steps of:

marking the second address; and

prompting the first user to take one or more actions with the second address.

32. The medium of Claim 25, wherein said updating further comprises the steps of:

counting a number of messages that indicate the status of the second address; and

determining whether or not the number of messages is above a threshold.

33. The medium of Claim 32, wherein said updating further comprises the step of:

determining an indicator indicating a likelihood of the second address being invalid.

34. The medium of Claim 25, wherein the second address comprises one of:

an address for electronic mails;

an address for a web page; and

a phone number.

35. The medium of Claim 26, wherein the record is a portion of an address book of a second user in the database.

36. The medium of Claim 26, wherein the second address is associated with a person who has a plurality of addresses; and

said updating comprises the step of:

adjusting priorities of the plurality of addresses for the person.